

## CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

comprising:

1. A method for fostering thinking associated with a selected topic,  
5 assembling a group of participants for the purpose of discussing a selected topic;  
causing the participants to construct models to serve as physical metaphors, said metaphors, relating to aspects of the topic;  
causing the participants to discuss the models they constructed and describe how the features of the model relate to the topic.  
10 2. The method of claim 1, wherein the topic involves business planning.  
3. The method of claim 2, wherein at least one of the metaphors represents an aspect of a company and at least one of the metaphors represent a customer of the company.  
15 4. The method of claim 3, wherein the participants are caused to create physical links between the physical metaphors representing the company and its customers, and the participants discuss the type of link selected and how that relates to how the company and its customers interact.  
5. The method of claim 4, wherein the participants discuss how to address  
20 changes in the way the company and its customers interact.  
6. The method of claim 5, wherein the participants identify guiding principles for governing how to address changes in the way the company interacts with its customers.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein the participants construct the models with connectable and detachable building blocks.

8. The method of claim 7, wherein at least a portion of the blocks have a rectangular top surface with raised cylindrical pegs and said blocks have a bottom surface configured to releasably receive the pegs, said blocks constructed to connect by inserting the pegs from one block into the bottom of a second block.

9. The method of claim 1, wherein at least a portion of the metaphors constructed represent real people.

10. The method of claim 1, wherein participants construct models selected from a predefined set.

11. The method of claim 1, wherein participants first construct models from a predefined set and then construct their own metaphoric models.

12. The method of claim 1, wherein models representing an object are reconfigured as a plurality of new objects.

13. The method of claim 1, wherein the participants build a model and tell a story relating to the topic that describes aspects of the model.

14. The method of claim 2 wherein at least one of the metaphors represents an aspect of a company and the participants construct models representing guiding principals for governing how to address changes in the way the company implements its business strategy.